



**COUNTY OF
SAN BERNARDINO**

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The Week Ahead in Washington D.C. – November 26, 2012

The House and Senate are back in session this week and deficit talks resume to avoid falling off the fiscal “cliff.” The cliff includes two prominent components, the sequestration cuts in both mandatory and discretionary non-exempt programs (scheduled for January 2) and the expiration of the Bush-era tax cuts (scheduled for January 1). However, there are several other closely related issues that, combined, make up the full set of fiscal problems that Congress must address, including the expiration of: extended unemployment benefits, the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) exemption that would affect 2012 taxes, Social Security employer's tax holiday; and the pending 27 percent cut in Medicare's physician reimbursement rates scheduled to take effect in January. Congressional leaders have reportedly begun submitting tax and spending ideas to the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Congressional Budget Office for viability consideration.

Below you will find a listing of federal legislative activities that, in addition to federal budget discussion, the County and our federal advocates are monitoring during the week of November 26, 2012.

House Hearings

Wednesday, November 28, 2012

10:00 a.m. - House Energy and Commerce Committee: *Combating Health Care Waste, Fraud and Abuse*. Subcommittee on Health reports: Each year, the Medicare program loses tens of billions of dollars to fraud and abuse. With estimates predicting the Medicare program could go bankrupt as soon as 2017, much more needs to be done to ensure that our seniors' health care dollars are protected. This hearing will access current anti-fraud measures employed by CMS and explore potential new approaches to address these substantial and ongoing threats. Webcast available [here](#).

Thursday, November 29, 2012

10:00 a.m. - Energy and Commerce Committee – Subcommittee on Communications and Technology: *Making Smarter Use of the Spectrum* – Focusing on the increasing demand for spectrum, and making smarter use of available spectrum. Webcast available [here](#).

10:00 a.m. - Energy and Commerce Committee – Subcommittee on Energy and Power: *Forum on Clean Air Act, Part III*. The third forum continues the theme of the first two events: “State, Local, and Federal Cooperation in the Clean Air Act.” The forum series is intended to provide an opportunity for members of Congress to hear a broad range of perspectives from experts about their experiences in implementing the Clean Air Act. Webcast available [here](#).

House Floor

November 27-30, 2012

Legislation Considered Under Suspension of the Rules:

H.R. 6025 - Mandatory Operational Control Reporting and Performance Measures Act of 2012. This bill would require the Homeland Security Department to annually report on the extent to which the northern and southern U.S. borders are secure, as well as the numbers of illegal aliens who entered the previous year and are living in the United States.

The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.

H.R. 5913 - *DHS Accountability Act of 2012*. This bill would create an independent advisory panel to comprehensively assess the management structure and capabilities related to the Department of Homeland Security and make recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the department. This bill is in response to a September GAO report that found most major Homeland Security Department acquisitions programs lack reliable cost estimates, realistic schedules and agreed-upon baseline objectives.

H.R. 5997 - *Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act*. This bill expands the existing authorization of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding to allow the local use of those funds for general emergency medical preparedness programs, such as medical surge capacity and mass prophylaxis capabilities. That would allow the funds to be used for development and maintenance of an initial pharmaceutical stockpile, medical kits, and diagnostics to aid first responders and the immediate victims of a chemical or biological event.

H.R. 3563 - *Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Modernization Act of 2012*. This bill requires that IPAWS use common standards, protocols, terminology and operating procedures. It must be able to send messages to specific geographic locations, and enable persons with disabilities to receive alerts. The bill also directs DHS to work with other federal agencies; state, local and tribal governments; and the private sector to leverage existing warning systems.

H.R. 915 - *Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act*. This bill specifically would require the Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) program to facilitate collaboration among federal, state, local, tribal and foreign law enforcement agencies on border security-related activities and to enhance information-sharing, including the dissemination of homeland security information, among the agencies.

H.R. 6328 - *Clothe a Homeless Hero Act*. This bill would direct the Homeland Security Department to transfer unclaimed clothing recovered at airport security checkpoints to local veterans organizations or other charitable organizations. The measure authorizes the department to enter into agreements with airport authorities regarding the disposition of such items.

H.R. 6429 - *STEM Jobs Act of 2012*. This bill would create a new STEM Visa program under which foreign students who earn advanced degrees in computer sciences, engineering and mathematics at U.S. colleges and universities could remain in the United States to work in those fields. The measure provides 55,000 visas, eliminating the existing Diversity Visa program and reallocating the visas currently allotted for the diversity program. Unused visas in any one year would be carried over into the next year, through FY 2016.

Senate Hearing and Floor Schedule

No related hearings or bills have been announced for possible floor consideration.